



# **Coral Reef Ecosystem**

- Roughly 70% of the world's coral reefs are located in the Pacific Ocean.
- Approximately 94% of the coral reefs under US jurisdiction are located in the Pacific Ocean.
- Coral reef resources in the Western Pacific Region—Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and US remote Pacific islands (Palmyra Atoll, Kingman Reef and Midway, Johnston, Wake, Howland, Baker and Jarvis Islands)—cover an estimated 15,822 km<sup>2</sup>, most of which (10,762 km<sup>2</sup>) is in the US exclusive economic zone (generally, 3–200 miles offshore) surrounding these islands.
- The Coral Reef Ecosystem Fishery Management Plan (FMP) being developed by the Council will regulate the use of the coral reef resources in the US EEZ of the Western Pacific Region.
- The overall goal of the FMP is to ensure that coral reef resources in the US EEZ of the Western Pacific Region are effectively managed to achieve a sustainable balance of economic productivity, ecological integrity and social acceptability.
- In October 1999, the Council identified the following preferred management alternatives:
  - fishing permit and reporting requirements
  - allowable fishing gears and methods
  - marine protected areas
  - a framework process that will enable the Council through a rule-making process to rapidly change the regulatory regime governing the coral reef ecosystem
  - an established process for coordination with other Council FMPs (i.e., bottomfish, pelagics, crustaceans and precious coral fisheries)
- Among the measures that may be considered in the future for inclusion in the FMP are the following:
  - additional marine protected areas
  - anchoring prohibitions
  - installation of mooring buoys
  - identification requirements on passive fishing gear (e.g., nets, traps, etc.)
  - vessel monitoring system requirements